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Mr. Patrick Joseph O'Hara.

Patrick Joseph O'Hara, a song from whose pen has just been published by the Opus Music Co., is a native of County Tipperary, Ireland. He received his early education in France, Germany and Belgium, among musical surroundings; and though music did not then, or indeed at any time, form part of his regular studies, the influence of early environment has probably much to say to the fact that, amidst the preoccupations of other work, he has always maintained a keen interest in the art. In his early manhood he, for a time, adopted the stage as a career and gained a pretty wide experience of theatrical matters with a repertoire company touring the English provincial towns—an experience which was afterwards to prove of value to him when engaged in the composition of musical drama. His compositions, vocal and instrumental, cover a fairly wide range; but his most characteristic work reflects unmistakably the spirit and attributes of his own race; and he is looked upon as one of the most promising of the composers who represent the musical side of the present Irish revival. His song, 'Thady O'Grady,' published by the Opus Music Co., may be considered as a characteristic example of his best manner in the treatment of an Irish theme—a manner which shows little trace of

the methods of his predecessors in the same field of work.

Alfredo Nardi.

Alfredo Nardi, known all over musical Italy as Il Maestro Romano, was born in Leghorn, 1860. In his earlier years he received a classical education, and was passionately fond of Greek and Latin. He also took a lively interest in travelling, and it seems that any book which came under his hands never passed many days before he was cognizant of its contents. New inventions also claimed his interest, but he was very superstitious of the supernatural. I have written all this to give my readers an idea of the especially liberally-inclined mind that Signor Nardi possesses over and above his present profession.

At 9 years of age Signor F. Favillè commenced his teaching of young Nardi. In spite of the Signor's predictions that his pupil would not follow the footpaths set by previous *virtuosi*, we find him in the capacity of first violin and viola in the orchestra Massina, belonging to *La Societe de Concerti Orchestral*, the concerts of which society took place at the Regio Teatro Apollino, Rome.

Shortly after this appointment, Nardi was hit by a stone in the right eye with such force that for a year he became totally blind. The thrower of the stone, which was probably hurled by means of a sling, a very common weapon in those days, could never be discovered. Later on he dimly recovered the sight of his left eye.

In 1884, Eugenionio Serziani, a well-known

Roman pedagogue, by chance heard of some music which Nardi had composed, with the result that for six years he instructed Nardi in counterpoint, fugue and composition. The success of these six years' hard work is shown by the fact that Signor Nardi was giving choral and orchestral concerts, the whole programme often being wholly devoted to his own compositions.

Some time in the year 1893, Signor Nardi finished composing his Quartett in F major, (which has won many prizes), a grand opera entitled 'Vendicate'; also twelve fugues for organ.

Between 1896 and 1897, in spite of the disadvantage to his eyes, we find the Maestro giving his greatest number of concerts, at some of which we find Antonio Bazzini, at Milan, and P. Mascaglini, at Rome, in the capacity of conductors.

In 1907 the Maestro published his 'Minuetto Classicus,' in Germany and Austria, and was received with the greatest praise by both press and public; also a sincere but eulogistic letter from Dr. Zepler, editor of *Massik für Alle*.

In 1900, Nardi's favourite composition, a Greek poem entitled 'Eros,' was finished at Milan, this being the real touch of heroism for art's sake, for his sight sadly impeded his work, and at the last few pages completely gave way. Absolute rest was imperative, but in spite of doctors' orders we find a beautiful Indian poem, entitled 'Siva,' by the Maestro. Then an enforced rest was taken in the Abruzzi mountains.

It was in 1906 that, due to the impressions of a great many English friends in Rome, that he decided to come to England, and after a wonderfully successful farewell concert, he started for London. By now he has grown accustomed to England and its ways, and is enchanted with them, and refuses to leave.

During his stay in England he has appeared at many concerts and music halls. His greatest achievement is the acceptance of his 'Joyous March' and his 'Solemn March' by His Most Gracious Majesty King George V.

July 21st, 1911.

Strength, peace, and love,
Encompass thee!
God's Holy Dove.
O'ershadow thee.
Hope's radiant star
Shed its soft rays,
And lead thee on
To brighter days!

EMILY A. HILL.

The Ancient Dance-forms¹

By JEFFREY PULVER.

(Continued from page 111).

Muffat's '*Florilegium Primum*,' published in 1695,² contains in *Fasciculus III* a Chaconne which closes the suite. It is quite elementary in form, and of no ambitious length. The construction of the whole suite is rather unusual, and certain forms not generally found together are here in juxtaposition. They are: *Symphonie*, *Balet (sic)*, *Canaries*, *Gigue*, *Sarabande*, *Bourrée*, and *Chaconne*. Another short and simple example of the Chaconne is contained in the sixth *Fasciculus* of the same work.

It is interesting and entertaining to notice how France set the fashion in music and the dance, at that period, for the rest of Europe. We find Nieldt, in his '*Handleitung zur Variation*' (Leipzig, 1706), suggesting the inclusion of a *Trio* in the Chaconne, '*Weilndoch jetzo alles Fräntzisch seyn soll*' ('because everything is supposed to be French now-a-days'); and this trio, adds the writer, could be repeated after every eight or ten variations. This innovation did not seem to find much favour; to the German mind the Chaconne did not lend itself to such treatment (as the later Menuet and Gavotte did), and no doubt the old Germans were right.

It is only when we come to Johann Sebastian Bach that we find the Chaconne raised to its highest point, in all the transcendent glory of Bach's theme and Bach's treatment. The unequalled originality of this giant in music is shown in the Chaconnes perhaps as well as in any other of the forms in which he wrote; nor was he a slave to convention when his genius required different means of expression than the orthodox treatment would allow. Thus we find Bach using the Chaconne-form in choral works, and the fact that it was 'originally a dance-form did not form an obstacle to prevent such use' (Ph. Spitta). The greatest height of enthusiasm touched by the great cantor's biographer is reached when he describes Bach's Chaconnes, and it would be a useless sacrilege to question one word of this deserved eulogy.

But if Johann Sebastian flouted convention by the choral treatment of the form, he adhered strictly to the rule when using the form for instrumental use. Here it occupied the orthodox position as closing movement of the suite or the wrongly so-called sonata. Spitta thinks that the importance and length of

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² Reproduced under the editorship of Heinrich Rietsch, in the series '*Denksmäler der Tonkunst in Oestreich*,' 1895.





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Bach's Chaconnes give them a right to be considered as independent, added pieces, and that the suite proper was already ended with the Gigue. This latter form did certainly end most of the early partitas (as we saw when dealing with the Gigue), and thus the Chaconne, as Spitta maintains, must be regarded as an additional movement in which the composer could demonstrate his technique and ingenuity; and it was in this form and for this purpose that it was used to close the stage ballets and operas of Lully, Gluck and the others.

I cannot bring myself to leave the Chaconnes of Bach without dilating upon the specimen (which, to my mind, is the finest example of the Chaconne extant) in the D minor Partita for violin alone. 'This Chaconne,' says Spitta, 'is a triumph of mind over matter—a triumph that has not been equalled or repeated more brilliantly'—and 'you cannot add a note to it without error.' Here is a Chaconne *par excellence*; and the dance origin has been completely lost sight of. The suite consists of *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, and *Gigue*—the stereotyped partita—and then is added the Chaconne with its twenty-eight unequalled variations.

Following the example of Bach, nearly every composer of note wrote in the Chaconne form; in fact, so popular did it become as an instrumental piece, that the name was frequently dropped, as in the case of Beethoven's 'Thirty-two Variations on an original theme;' and to-day, the composers who strive to perpetuate the forms of the days that saw the birth of modern music still use the Chaconne-form as one eminently adapted to show their tendency and their skill. It will be sufficient to mention the Chaconnes of Max Reger.

(To be continued.)

Miss Janet Wheeler.—At Miss Janet Wheeler's pianoforte recital at the Æolian Hall, on November 2nd, the attendance was unfortunately very small, but those present had the opportunity of listening to a remarkably interesting programme, performed in a capable and musicianly manner. Miss Wheeler (Mrs. de Sélincourt) is possessed of great musical taste and feeling, and keeps the *fortissimos* in agreeable moderation, rather unusual in these days. The programme contained some of Brahms' Balladen (op. 10), of which we preferred the *intermezzo*, which included some charming passages. In the Sonata in E flat (op. 31), of Beethoven, Miss Wheeler created somewhat less of a success, her *tempo* being occasionally at variance with that of the composer, though the rendering of the *presto* was very fine. Mozart was repre-

sented by a Phantasie, No. 2, which was given with much skill, and the programme closed with Schubert's 'Wanderer' Phantasie, a showy performance, excellent for exhibiting technique, which Miss Wheeler possesses in no small degree.

W.R.M.

A Song of Harmony.

'Dear love of mine,' sang Harmony to Melody,

'Together hand in hand for ever we;
Th' Immortals wedded us for all eternity,
That earth-bound mortals heavenward
raised may be,

'We have a strain for ev'ry grief and pleasure,
A martial chant or song of ecstasy;
Joy, love and hope, in these divinest measure,
With us each mood can inspiration be.

'When sad we'll sing to these a song so
glorious,
With hope and courage swelling through
the strain;

That they from disappointments rise vic-
torious,

With hearts attuned to greater thoughts
again,

'And when they bow their heads in heavy
sorrow,

A plaintive strain of sympathy shall swell;
That they may think with comfort of the
morrow,

And realize the Power which plans all
well.

'Throughout the generations these dear
mortals

Shall have us near in perfect sympathy;
We'll lead them gently thro' the mystic
portals

To rest in our dear land of minstrelsy.'

L. DOUGLAS SHARPS.

Miss Eda Rosenbusch gave a capital German song recital at the Æolian Hall on Wednesday evening, October 25th. Her voice is clear and strong, if a little hard at times, and her enunciation praiseworthy. It would be well, indeed, if all singers were equally intelligible. The programme contained four songs of E. Wolff, two each of Franz, Schubert and H. Wolf, and one each of Schumann, Von Fielitz, Strauss, Reger, Oscar Straus, Haille, D'Albert and Goldmark. Miss Rosenbusch was perhaps at her best in 'Frühlingswonne,' 'Vogelweisheit,' 'Verborgenheit,' and the enchanting 'Wiegenlied' (D'Albert), but the humour of 'Mausfallen-sprüchlein' and 'Soll ich ihn lieben' was well

expressed. In 'Wohin' the singer was less successful, as notes and words were slurred occasionally; this well-known song is not easy to render effectively. Mr. Richard Epstein was, as is his wont, a helpful accompanist, whose work is beyond all praise, and thanks to both artistes we enjoyed a real feast of beautiful German melody.

W.R.M.

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The London Trio commenced its season of chamber music on October 30th at the Aeolian Hall. We have had the pleasure of enjoying the capital educational work performed by this Trio on other occasions. The programme opened with Brahms' Trio in C major, and all the best qualities of ensemble playing were in evidence, particularly in the *scherzo* and *presto* movements. Each member of the Trio takes turn in providing solos at these concerts, and we had the advantage of hearing Mr. Whitehouse perform 'Variations Concertantes' (Boellmann). Smetana's Trio in G minor was given with great skill. This composition is rather a curious one, containing many intricacies and niceties of technique. The vocalist on this occasion was Mrs. Harry Bedford, the possessor of a pleasing though light voice, more suitable to a drawing room than to a hall. Her choice of songs was excellent, and she achieved success in her rendering of some quaint old folk songs, notably 'Lord Rendal' (English) 'Ballynure Ballad' (Irish) and 'Cuckoo Fach' (Welsh).

Croydon Symphony Orchestra.—This newly-formed musical society has for its President Sir Henry J. Wood, and Mr. Oswald Laston is the 1st violin. The first concert was held on November 1st with great success. The Hon. Secretary is Mr. W. H. Saunders. All communications should be addressed to the Public Hall, Croydon. We wish the Orchestra every success.

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'The Technic of the Bow,' by M. B. Hildebrandt (56 pp. title and cover, frontispiece of five blocks). Price 4/- nett.

This really excellent work should be in the hands of all violinists, its simplicity is so convincing. The object of the work is to adapt to the technique of the bow 'the psycho-physiological principles of the piano,' and in his preface the author refers to certain German works which have influenced him in the matter. The 14 chapters are: (1) Pedagogy, (2) Technic, (3) Exercises of the first Degree, (4) The Attaque, (5) The Legato, (6) Changing the Bow, (7) The Sonfilé—tone-spinning—(8) The Singing tone, (9) The Staccato, (10) Three Bowings—martelé—(11) The Spiccato—sautillé—(12) The Arpeggio, (13) The Tossing of the Bow, (14) The Breathing and Conclusion. There are 18 examples of music chosen from such famous authors as Tartini, Paganini, Léonard, etc., and it may be noted that they are chosen because they are the *easiest* which illustrate the author's several chapters. We have not space to describe more fully 'the synergy of the muscles' and the breathing exercises, but we are sure that all violinists would benefit by its perusal.

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statement, this especially in the musical art. Macaulay, in his famous essays speaking of the poet John Milton, suggests that poetic genius is related to insanity of a mild form; 'fine frenzy,' he terms it. Fine frenzy, madness or whatever name may be given, one has only to study and read the biographies of our great men to see that a mild insanity, or in other words, more polite, eccentricity prevades their lives.

When we consider that the composer lives in a land of thought (metaphorically speaking), and that all his energies are given to one sphere of activity, it is perhaps natural that he develops certain temperamental eccentricities, which mark him from his fellows. The same can be said of the other arts and sciences. A man lives in his art, the poet also in an imaginary world of his making, like the composer.

This emotional element of their natures has, to a great extent, unfitted them for mixing with their ordinary fellow-man of the world. With the musician his mind is always buried in a sea of sound thoughts. His incompetence in business is well known, though exceptions must be made. Who was more unbusiness-like than Beethoven, Handel, Schubert and Mozart? The former of these was continually treated badly by his own nephew and publishers. His own conduct was most extraordinary, his biographers state that he was the most awkward and helpless of men, his every movement lacking grace. Ries states that 'Beethoven seldom laid his hand upon anything without breaking it; thus he several times emptied the contents of the inkstand into the neighbouring piano. No one piece of furniture was safe with him and least of all a costly one. He used either to upset, stain or destroy it. How he ever managed to learn the art of shaving himself still remains a riddle, leaving the frequent cuts visible in his face quite out of the question. He never could learn to dance in time.'

This great composer's value of money was most childlike and was often the cause of trouble. He would fancy himself deceived when such was not the case, and at such times his insults were disgraceful. At the hotels which he patronized, they became so used to his eccentric behaviour that they would let him do anything and allow him to leave without paying his bill. No doubt when his fit of temper or absentmindedness had passed he would return and pay the bill. A story of his irritable temper is well known but will perhaps bear repetition. He was one day dining out when the waiter brought him a wrong dish. Beethoven had no sooner uttered

a few words of reproof (to which the other retorted in no very polite manner) than he took the dish, which was amply filled with the gravy of the stewed beef it contained, and threw it at the waiter's head. The latter, whose arms were full of plates containing different orders, was unable to wipe his face or relieve himself in any way. Both he and the composer swore and shouted at each other, whilst all the other people roared with laughter. At last, Beethoven joined the chorus on looking at the waiter who was licking in with his tongue the stream of gravy; which, much as he fought against it, hindered him from uttering any more remarks.

Another instance of his eccentric manner was the treatment afforded his poor cook. His favourite dish was a kind of bread-soup which he prepared himself. In the making of this several eggs were used. These eggs he was very particular to have quite fresh, and should it unfortunately happen that any of them were bad, a fearful scene followed. The cook was called, but the moment she made her appearance she was met with a fusillade of eggs and had to beat a hasty retreat. He would remark that his cook could not be 'pure in heart' seeing that she was absolutely incapable of making good soup. His characteristic bluntness is shown by the treatment he gave his brother, who sent Beethoven his card with 'Beethoven, land proprietor,' which the composer returned after writing upon the back '*Ludwig van Beethoven, brain proprietor.*' His walks usually consisted of a trot generally in the rain, and he became quite a well-known figure in Vienna.

In his apartments he was always receiving notice to quit, and one cannot help but sympathize with the landlords and landladies, especially when they had a lodger who, after playing the piano at its loudest owing to his imperfection of hearing, would, to cool his hands after this exertion, seize the water-jug and pour water over them. This without considering the floor or ceiling beneath. It is stated that the same jug is still in existence and highly prized.

Beethoven's behaviour in company was not at all to be desired, and we read that on one occasion, while playing at a celebrated count's in Vienna, a conversation was carried on in a rather loud tone of voice. The composer tried by his playing to silence the speakers, but failed. At last, losing all patience, he sprang up from the piano with the remark, 'I do not play for such swine,' and all attempts to make him return to the instrument proved useless.

Let us now turn to another great tone poet, George Fredrick Handel; his eccentricities

displayed themselves in many ways. Intending to dine at a certain tavern, he ordered beforehand, a dinner for three persons. At the appointed hour Handel sat down at the table and expressed his astonishment that the dinner was not brought up. The inn-keeper said, 'It shall come up, sir, immediately the company arrives.' 'Den bring up de tinner prestissimo,' replied the composer, 'I am de gombany.' His horror of the 'tuning up' of the orchestra was well known and such a proceeding, he insisted, should take place before a concert. This rule was invariably followed, but unfortunately, at one memorable concert, somebody with a love for joking obtained private access to the orchestra where all the instruments were laying ready for use; they cleverly put every string and crook out of tune. When Handel appeared, the result when the first chord was struck can be better imagined than described. His rage was terrible to behold, and it could always be foretold by the behaviour of his large wig which had a singular habit of moving up and down, no doubt as a reminder of its owner's wrath. The composer's dislike for degrees was very pronounced. He was offered the Oxford 'Doctor in Music' degree. The degree fee amounted in those days to £100. On being asked why he refused the honour, he replied, 'What the devil I throw my money away? for dat vich de blockheads vish, I no want!'

Like all great musicians, Handel looked upon his art as something greater and nobler than to form mere amusement and pastime. This can be seen in the sublime airs of the 'Messiah' and it is stated that the composer was found sobbing while writing the music of 'He was despised and rejected of men.' At rehearsals he was most hard to please. All great singers have their fancies, and in Handel's time he had great trouble with Madame Cuzzoni. She had a wicked temper; so had he. During rehearsal she refused to sing one of the airs, whereupon, the composer seized her in his arms, saying, 'Madam, I know you are my she-devil, but I will have you know that I am Beelzebub, the prince of the devils,' and he made as though he would throw her out of the window. As a final anecdote of this great man and his character we must go back to the period of Marylebone Gardens. One evening Handel and one of his musical friends were walking in these gardens. A new piece was played by the orchestra. 'Come, Mr. Fountagne,' said the composer, 'let us sit down and listen to this piece; I want to know your opinion about it.' Down they sat, and after some time the friend, turning to his companion, said, 'It is not worth listening to; it is

very poor stuff.' 'You are quite right, Mr. Fountagne,' said Handel, 'it is very poor stuff; I thought so myself when I had finished it.' The old gentleman, being taken by surprise, was beginning to apologise, but Handel assured him there was no necessity and that the music was really bad, having been composed hastily, and that the opinion given was as correct as it was honest.

Mozart cannot be called an eccentric man in the sense Beethoven and Handel were. He mixed a great deal with the court life at one period of his history. Among his eccentricities was that of a paper which he wrote in the presence of a lawyer. This document was written at the request of his future mother-in-law, and its terms were that he agreed to marry one of this lady's daughters within three years if she still cared to accept his offer; she having the option to either refuse or accept the composer. In case Mozart was, through unavoidable events, unable to carry out his promise, he pledged himself to support her in the condition of a stranger, no matter where she lived or how she lived, all her life long by the payment of an annual sum to be paid at regular periods.

Another story attributed to this composer seems scarcely credible. He was out walking one day, when a very squalid and hungry-looking beggar went up to him and implored him to have compassion on him. Mozart, upon consulting his pocket, found that this was impossible at the moment. As he stood pondering what he should do, he suddenly pulled from his pocket a roll of music paper, sketched some music upon it, and then gave it to the beggar, together with a note and the address of a music publisher to whom they were to be taken. No sooner did the publisher see the music than he handed the bearer of it a few golden ducats with which he went on his way rejoicing.

On another occasion a friend found Mozart and his wife dancing about their room, and doubtless betrayed some surprise. 'Oh,' explained the composer, 'we can't afford fuel so we are dancing to keep ourselves warm.' His presentiment of his own death was most mournful, according to one of his biographers, who states that 'one night in the year 1791 there came a stranger with the order for a requiem. The composer persuaded himself that this was a visitor from the other world, and laboured at the work as if under some solemn obligation.' It was while at work upon this that he breathed his last in the arms of his wife and his friend Süssmaier. The stranger who had called and ordered the requiem was Count Wabseck who had recently

lost his wife and wished for a musical memorial.

Of a morbid and unhealthy temperament, Chopin stands out as a composer. This was due to his state of health and sensitive mind. The supposed origin of the famous *Marche Funèbre* is an instance of a morbid eccentricity. The events took place in the studio of Ziem. Late one afternoon Chopin and Ziem were talking together. In one corner of the room stood a piano, and in another the complete skeleton of a man with a large white cloth thrown ghost-like about it. Now and again Chopin's gaze wandered round the room and it was apparent that he was lost to his surroundings. Suddenly he rose and like a sleepwalker glided over to the skeleton and removed the cloth. He then carried it to the piano, and seating himself, took the hideous object upon his knees. A strange picture of life and death. Then drawing the white cloth round himself and the skeleton, he laid the latter's fingers over his own and began to play. Suddenly the music ceased and with a crash the composer lay unconscious on the floor and beside him, smashed to pieces, was the skeleton. The musician had swooned, but his march was found.

Chopin was a man full of superstitions. He had a great objection to the numbers seven and thirteen and would never invite more than twelve guests to dinner. He would undertake nothing of importance on a Monday or Friday.

His appearance never troubled him, and it is recorded in a letter to his parents in 1831, where he says, 'When they saw me at Madame Schaschek's, their astonishment knew no bounds at my looking such a proper fellow; I had left my whiskers only on the right cheek. They grow very well there, and there is no occasion to have them on my left cheek, as I always sit with my right towards the audience.'

In another of his letters he speaks of a polonaise being ready in his head and states that one evening when he was alone in the dark, trying over the A major polonaise, which he had just completed, he saw the door open and in marched a procession of Polish knights and ladies in mediæval costumes. He was so alarmed that he fled through the opposite door and did not venture to return. Another illustration of the relation between genius and insanity.

Wagner's curious ideas regarding his own personality are generally well known. One was to have his grave prepared during his lifetime. It was dug in the garden attached to his residence. The garden, which was a large one, allowed for the grave to be situated

some little distance from the house and effectively concealed; this latter idea allowing him either to forget its existence or, if he so wished, have a look at his future resting place. Had he been content with this arrangement, well and good, but when friends dined with him, Wagner would suddenly break off the conversation and commence speaking about the grave and eternity. He would then invite them to come with him and see his own grave, leading the way with the utmost calmness.

We are also told that the composer was a very vain man, especially as regards his person. On his forty-second birthday his wife sent him a dressing-gown of violet velvet, and taught his parrot to say, '*Wagner, du bist ein gross Mann.*' (Wagner, you are a great man.) A fondness for rich and costly wearing apparel was another of his weaknesses. He always wore silk next his skin, and insisted that his pockets, his sleeve linings, and the back of his vest should be made of silk. In London the tailor expostulated with him, saying that even the richest people did not have silk linings to their clothes. 'The silk is never seen,' he said. At this Wagner flew into a fury. 'Never seen—yes, that's the tendency of the century—sham, sham in everything; that which is not seen may be paltry if the exterior be richly gilded!'

Haydn's eccentricities were not very great. His apartment was a pattern of neatness, so different to Beethoven's. His composing was done in early morning or as he himself stated, 'up with the lark.' Everything must be in correct order before he commenced his work, and not only this regarding the apartment, but he was most magnificently attired himself, in full court dress, with wig, sword and ruffles; on his finger a particular ring which he greatly valued. When questioned on this matter he would declare that any music written without it 'had not the proper ring.'

Schumann's strange vagaries are not to be wondered at for we know that his brain was afflicted, especially towards the end of his life, by ossification which resulted in his confinement in a madhouse, where he died on July 25th, 1856. He was a very silent man and a story is told of this silence. Schumann had discovered some excellent wine at a certain restaurant and thither he asked a friend to accompany him to luncheon. During the walk there and back, the only remark the composer made was about the rare beauty of such a summer day as it happened to be, when all was silent and perfect peace reigned in Nature. A second excursion had a similar result. At such times the outward world only existed for Schumann in so much as it chanced to form

part of his dreams. He looked upon society much as a means to awaken him from the feeling of solitude.

As another instance of this strange reticence: in 1845 Hiller and Schubert took Felicien David to see the composer. 'Schubert and I,' said Hiller, 'kept on talking, chiefly in order to break the almost painful silence that had fallen upon us after the first greetings were over. Schumann and David listened to our talk without making any remark in spite of the opportunities we gave them of doing so. After some time, said Hiller, 'I began to feel oppressed. Presently Schumann said in a low voice to me, 'David speaks very little.' 'Not much,' I replied. 'That is nice,' was Schumann's comment as he smiled pleasantly.'

When Wagner visited the composer, he spoke to him on every possible subject, but all vain. In reference to this conversation, Hanslick further reports that Schumann said of Wagner that the composer of 'Tannhäuser' was a very well-informed and talented man, but that he talked incessantly and one could not put up with it for long!

When editor of the musical paper he founded, '*Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*,' he fell in love with a charming young lady who became Madame Schumann. It was his habit to show his affection for the lady by printing a love-letter every week *in extenso*. In the letter he called her the most endearing names and made proposals, flattering himself that these outbreaks and the identity of persons mentioned were unnoticed and ignored by his readers.

In his composing he had most singular theories of keys and time. Certain keys, he said, reminded him of certain things; others he chose according to the period of the year. For instance, the key of E (four sharps) was suggestive of streams and rippling brooks. The key of F minor (four flats) he avoided as much as possible, his reason for such an aversion being that it always brought to his imagination death and judgment and the figure of the rider on the white horse in the Apocalypse. In later years he was constantly haunted with the note A which, he stated, sang in his ears and never left him. To escape the sound of this note the poor fellow attempted to commit suicide, but was frustrated by the timely rescue of his friends.

Mendelssohn's principal eccentricity, if it can be called such, was a strange aversion to butter. When questioned on this subject he would reply, 'I make wine my substitute for butter,' and suiting the action to the word by washing down a slice of dry bread with a glass of wine. The Rev. Haweis tells us in one of his very interesting books on music that

'Mendelssohn was of a very excitable temperament, which on one, and that not a very extraordinary occasion, brought him to the brink of delirium from which he was recovered by 'a profound sleep' of twelve hours. It was by these sleeps, often almost like death in their torpor, that Nature recreated a frame constantly overtaxed to the extreme limits of endurance by nervous excitement.'

The composer Schubert was, according to his friend Vogel, of a strange and dreamy temperament. He tells us that on one occasion the composer left a new song which he had composed at his (Vogel's) apartments. The song, being too high, was transposed into a lower key. Vogel, a fortnight afterwards, sang it in the lower key to his friend Schubert who remarked, 'Really, that song is not bad; who composed it?' Another tale is told of this composer by Franz Lachner. Calling one day on Schubert, Lachner found him in despair. Not one idea would come to him; the spring of his wonderful inspiration had entirely dried up. 'O well,' said Schubert, 'let's drink some coffee.' Berries were put into the domestic mill and the owner was grinding them when suddenly he exclaimed, 'I have it,' left the mill and rushed to the piano. 'How lucky to own such a mill! Its *ravara* inspires me and transports me into a world of fantasy; that which my brain seeks for whole days my little machine often gives me in a minute.' Such a coffee mill would be a god-send to the composer that lacks inspiration. One wonders what became of it.

Writing of coffee mills, we are reminded of the Italian composer, Donizetti, who was accustomed to lock himself in his room while composing and take with him three or four coffee pots full of coffee. He would gradually drink these, keeping them heated on a small, portable stove. When finished he would order more to be brewed. The amount of coffee he must have drank seems incredible, yet it appeared indispensable for his flow of inspiration. As a result of this bad habit, the composer's face assumed an appearance almost yellow in colour like that of a Chinese. His nervous system suffering severely by this abuse.

The last two which can be mentioned here are Rossini and Liszt. The former's eccentricity was of the laziest kind. His hour of rising was about mid-day; even then, if not in the mood, he would turn over and sleep again. A large amount of his music was composed while in bed. It was his habit to have music paper and writing materials at his bedside, so that without the effort of disturbing himself he could stretch out his hand, reach

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F. FANTASIES.—In reference to your queries, re Mr. Heron Allen's book, I understand that $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of an inch is an error; it should have been $\frac{5}{8}$ ths. It probably occurred owing to the author working under the old French measurements and wrongly transcribing. The Pied de Roi was divided into 12, and then to 12 divisions again. It is still used, I believe, in luthiers' art and in glove making. The sizes of the patterns folded and given in the book are correct. Measured on the flat or on the curve—for the Strad or the Guarnerius. The method of measurement makes a considerable difference.

TONE, S.J.—As you ask for our personal liking in the matter of tone, we give our first six; but please remember that, like the selection of an All-England Cricket XI, opinions differ: (1) Maggini, (2) Gaspara da Salo, (3) Joseph Guarnerius, (4) Francesco Stradivari, (5) Carlo Bergonzi, (6) Antonio Stradivari. Those who like a bright, cheerful tone, without great depth, will probably place Antonio first; but there is a lot of sentiment about tone. To be sure of this you have only to try several violins by ear only, i.e., without seeing them, to find how difficult it is to detect the right name.

B. DE V. (Brussels).—Not that we know of; but why not subscribe (2/6 per annum)?

OLD WILLIAM.—We certainly had not thought of this contingency. Perhaps you will let us know the sequel, and if we may publish the result?

SONATAS.—Try Niels Gade, op 21 (Augener), 2/6; two by Schumann (Breitkopf), 1/- each; any by Beethoven; three by Greig (Peters); César Franck (Hamel), 7 frs; Gabriel Fauré (Breitkopf). Of old music there is David's 'Hohe Schule' (Breitkopf), and an excellent series, edited by Jensen, in Augener's edition. This list will take you years to learn properly, so get one at a time, and really master it.

NIC. PAG. (Mexico).—Paganini was born February 18th, 1784, at Genoa, and died at Nice, May 27th, 1840. He played on a Joseph Guarnerius, which was given him by M. Livron. This is preserved at Genoa. The following books may be useful to you: Imbert de Laphaleque, *Notice sur Paganini*, 1830; Anders, *Paganini Sa Vie*, Paris, 1831; *Lady's Magazine*, 'Biographical Sketch,' 1831; Conastabile, *Vita di Paganini*, 1851; Bruni, P., *Paganini, Celebre Violinista*, Firenze, 1873.

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paper and ink, thus giving outlet to his inspiration. One day after writing a beautiful duet in bed and almost completing it, the sheet of music rolled off the bed and continued to do so for some distance. Rossini, too lazy to get from his bed, decided to write a new duet rather than disturb himself. Therefore, in his opera, '*Il Turco in Italia*,' there are two duets for one situation, and singers can always choose the one they like best.

Liszt's eccentricities were founded upon vanity of his person. He would play if in the mood, but if pressed against his inclination was most grossly insulting. On one occasion this occurred and after refusing, on still being pressed, he went to the piano and dashed off a brilliant little piece after which he hurried from the room with the remark, 'There, I have paid for my dinner.' As a teacher, he must, in some cases, have driven his pupils to despair. One of his pupils was performing in the presence of a class a work of the composer. Suddenly Liszt made the remark, 'That is not how I should play,' and seating himself on the stool by the young player, he played on the keyboard with him. Gradually he encroached more and more until, having pushed the young man to the extreme end of the stool, with a vigorous jerk he precipitated him from the stool to the floor.

Cases of eccentricity could be recorded innumerable, showing the characters of the individuals, but enough has perhaps been given to answer our purpose.

Mr. J. H. Bonawitz.—The well-known and esteemed Mr. J. H. Bonawitz (founder of the Mozart Society) achieved much success with his new opera, '*Napoleon*,' given at the Portman Rooms on October 28th. This opera is a remarkably fine production, with a most realistic tone in the martial music. The chorus and full orchestra took part on this occasion, and Mr. Percy Heming as Napoleon was a marked success in his extremely difficult rôle as leader of the army and as the impassioned husband of the unhappy Josephine. The latter character was accomplished most satisfactorily by Miss Lotte Liess, while that of Hortense was sung by Mme. Costi. We append a slight synopsis of this work: Battle-field of Marengo and announcement of victory, with praise from Napoleon for the bravery of his troops—The Empress Josephine in meditation over her new position—Coronation in Notre Dame, and finally—The Divorce. In Act iv we have Napoleon's abdication and farewell of the Guards and of General MacDonald, followed by the sudden reappearance of Bonaparte. The climax is reached in Act vi, when the hero, in his tent on the field

of Waterloo, sees the vision of Josephine and hears words of consolation. The strains of '*Rule Britannia*' are heard, and Napoleon gives vent to a fine speech. This composition is deserving of popularity, and the whole spirit of war is well maintained throughout, while the pathos of the domestic side makes an agreeable relief from the booming of cannon.

S. L.

Mme. Fischer-Sobell's Matinee Musicale.

On the afternoon of October 21st, Madame Sobell gave a very large audience a treat of no ordinary order, at her studio at Swiss Cottage. Herself a pianist of very great ability, she imbues her performances with musicianly enthusiasm that takes her hearers with it through all the changing moods of each composition. In such well-known works as Brahms' Rhapsody in G minor and Chopin's Ballade in A flat, she adds to a remarkable technique an almost childlike simplicity of interpretation that completely disarms all criticism. Opening the programme, Mme. Sobell joined Miss Vera French in César Franck's Sonata in A. Here, as in her solos, the pianiste exhibited a most exquisite touch—one that can allow her to interpret all her thoughts throughout the whole gamut of dynamics, of which the instrument is capable, and which it demands. Miss French possesses a beautifully smooth and sweet tone, an almost impeccable technique and excellent bowing; but she did not satisfy us musically. In the second and third movements of Franck's work she managed to entirely miss the intensely dramatic touch so clearly asked for by the music; and although the pianiste frequently foreshadowed expected touches of deeper interpretation, she found no echo in the violiniste. Might we also humbly recommend this otherwise excellent violiniste to use the *vibrato* more sparingly? Miss French showed to far better advantage in a pair of shorter pieces; here it was plainly evident what class of music best suited her—Couperins' '*La Précieuse*,' just breathed the right spirit, and here the violiniste was very deservedly encored.

Pressure on our space prevents us dwelling at length upon the beautiful singing of Mme. Sobrino, or upon the pleasing pianoforte playing of Signor Sobrino; but in the latter case we cannot refrain from remarking that a more frequent indulgence in something *more* than 'the mere notes' would have been most welcome.

It will be easily understood that an afternoon spent with such able exponents of their

several branches of the art could not have been other than most enjoyable and instructive, and Mme. Sobell is to be heartily congratulated upon what must be considered a thoroughly artistic success. A 'Students' musical afternoon is announced for December 9th.

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This well-known and enterprising firm, who are the owners of the Sevcik Method, have given us a fine edition of the works of Franz Drdla, arranged for violin I, II, viola and 'cello, with accompaniment for piano, in twelve numbers, ranging in price from 1/- to 1/6 nett each. (1) 'Romanze,' A major, (2) 'Serenade,' No. 2, E major, (3) op. 21, 'Dreaming,' (4) op. 24, 'Troisième Mazurka,' (5) op. 25, 'Madrigale,' (6) op. 28, 'Vision,' (7) op. 30, No. 4, 'Danse Hongroise,' 'Hej! Hay!' (8) op. 30, No. 6, 'Bartfaimelek,' 'Danse Hongroise,' (9) op. 31, 'Chant d'Amour,' Valse Chanson, (10) op. 33, 'Berceuse Wiegenlied,' Slumber Song, (11) op. 50, 'Danse Gracieuse,' à la Gavotte, (12) op. 71, 'Aubade d'été Humoresque,' a fine series.

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'Valse Matinee,' by Terence Waters. Piano solo, 2/- nett; small orchestra, 1/-; piano conductor, 8d.; extra parts 2d. each. A fine waltz. Quite the last out.

Published by the **Opus Music Co.**, No. 22, Leicester Square, W.C.

'Nada the Lily,' valse Intermezzo, composed by Alfred T. Parker. Piano, 1/6 nett; full orchestra, 2/- nett; small orchestra, 1/6 nett; extra parts, per page, 1½d. nett. This is a really fine waltz, and we would draw the attention of bands to the orchestral parts, both for small and large orchestras.

Published by **Messrs. Schott & Co.**, Regent Street, W.

'Menuet,' for violin and piano (Kubelik-répertoire), par Franz Drdla, op. 87, 1/8 nett. This is a bright and taking little solo, which requires careful handling to bring out the points. It is not necessary to go higher than the third position (unless desired), and there is no double stopping. We think a pizzicato G would end the piece better than as written. The piano part is quite easy.

'Trois Morceaux.' (1) 'Pierrot-Sérénade,' (2) 'Lamento,' (3) 'Nenia' (Berceuse), par Alb. Randegger, Jr., op. 33. Price 1/8 each, nett. The first is a graceful piece of considerable difficulty, if played in the most difficult way it is written, but all the difficulties have simplified parts over them; the second is a fine dirge with an accompaniment reminding one, at times, of Beethoven's 'Funeral March.' Rather difficult as it reaches the fifth position, and the piano part is more ambitious than the others; No. 3 strikes us as the least good of a very excellent trio. The fingering and bowing-marks are well done.

At Swanage.

I sit me down beside
The many-sounding tide
Of lucent sea;
Which, 'neath the azure huc
Of over-arching blue,
Rolls dreamily.

But bluer is the flow
Of summer sea below
Than where on high
No cloudlet flecks to-day
The pure ethereal way
Of boundless sky.

The glory of the hills
With awe my spirit fills,
So steadfast they,
Or when the leaf is sere
In the fast waning year,
Or spring is gay.

So hill and mountain range
Continue without change;
'Tis we that pass.
Our life is like the flower
That blooms but for an hour,
And like the grass.

Or like the pearly sheen,
Elusively, I ween,
Shot thro' the wave,
By Phoebus' mellow ray
On his declining way
To western grave.

But they perennial stand,
As when at God's command
They rose of old.
The beautiful curved lines
With which their slope declines,
Are tinged with gold.

Upon this glorious eve,
While I my tribute weave
With keen delight,
And seek in verse to tell
With what entrancing spell
They take my sight.

And then I turn to view
The exquisite pure blue
Of August seas,
My cheek meantime caress'd
From out the glowing west
By the soft breeze.

R.B.





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